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This document consists of excerpts from the journals of the 40 student participants in the Operation Fair Chance (OFC) project. OFC is a year-long program designed to provide effective teachers for lower economic areas through involving teacher candidates in the classroom at the start of the public school semester and having them work throughout the year to improve human relationships within the community. The report is divided into two sections which convey several aspects of OFC: reactions to the educational system in general (with observations on the need to build on the values of the ghetto child rather than to dismiss them as undesirables), experiences in specific classrooms (with observations on human relations and the teaching and learning processes), involvement in the community (including such activities as voter registration duties and teas), and specific program offerings such as seminars, field trips, and readings. Two larger journal selections are also included: a description of an attempt by a teacher candidate to reach a gifted but difficult child, and a capsule view of the growth and change of one candidate. A list of participants and staff is included, along with information about certification resulting from participation in the program. (SM)

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OPERATION FAIR CHANCE

...an experimental program in teacher preparation

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OPERATION FAIR CHANCE

The greatest and most consistent need for the education of socially disadvantaged children and youth is for improved training of teachers.

Traditional teacher education programs have not been effective in preparing teachers who are to work with disadvantaged youngsters. There has been a need for teachers with a better understanding of pupil attitudes and motivations, for new curricular materials and new ways of using them, for new involvement of parents and community in the affairs of the school. In order to identify, prepare and assist such teachers, it has been necessary to develop new and improved programs of teacher education. **Operation Fair Chance** *is an attempt to develop such a program. It is, of necessity, an experimental program which will undergo evaluation in the hope that useful guidelines, methods, techniques, and instructional materials may be identified and incorporated into traditional programs of teacher education.*

The main thrust underlying the objectives of **Operation Fair Chance** *is to have teacher candidates involved in the classroom at the start of the public school semester and to spend a full year working with parents and others to improve human relationships between school personnel and the members of the community. This has required an almost daily reshaping of the values and attitudes our candidates have brought with them into the program.*

In this book, one of the most important features is the graphic portrayal of intellectual and emotional growth of many of the candidates of the Second Class of **Operation Fair Chance** *as they progress through their first year of intimate confrontations with the socially disadvantaged.*

Tudor M. Jones, Director
Hayward/Oakland Center
Operation Fair Chance

INTRODUCTION

In September, 1967 about 40 Teacher Candidates from California State College at Hayward, together with five supervising staff members, moved into a former store front in East Oakland as **Operation Fair Chance.** We came with diverse backgrounds and interests, but with a common concern–to become effective teachers in a lower economic area. During the 1967/1968 school year, each of us kept individual journals of our experiences, reactions and reflections as we became involved in the life of the East Oakland community and an elementary or secondary classroom in particular. The result of these journals is what this book is all abut.

With the aid of the OFC staff, four OFC'ers–Marybeth Downs, Natascha Ginsburg, Sue McKinley and Burt Rodgers–chose entries from a wide selection of OFC journals and brought them together in a somewhat cohesive form to share with you the more personal side of OFC. We hope we can communicate what OFC was as a teacher training program, and especially what it was to those of us most involved in it.

The book is arranged into sections which convey several aspects of OFC: ideas about the reactions to the educational system in general, experiences in specific classrooms, involvement in the East Oakland community, and specific program offerings such as seminars, field trips, and readings. In addition to these aspects of OFC, we felt that two larger journal selections deserved special inclusion. Thus, we have included the saga of one OFC'er's relationship with a First Grader which is representative of many OFC'er's attempts to "reach" individual kids. We have concluded the book with a capsule view of the growth and change of one candidate, Nat Pearson, as he progressed through the year in OFC.

Along with the journal excerpts have been interspersed photographs, taken by Sue McKinley and Burt Rodgers during the year, of OFC candidates and their experiences.

Without the technical aid of Dr. John Gothberg of CSCH and Dottie McPherson, our diligent typist at OFC, this book would never have been completed. And without the candidates and staff of OFC, it would never even have come into existence.

East Oakland
August, 1968

The Editorial Committee

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The Educational System

During the first week of school I helped with registration of students. Those who can't do - teach – those who *really* can't do, counsel. Kids who were new to the school or kids who had dropped out were subjected to the various beaureaucratic torturing devices – such as waiting all day long in the auditorium – just to be informed at the end of the day that they must return there tomorrow. This episode and the administration of the I.Q. test constitute the only real horror show I've seen at the school.

Helping the kids fill out their forms, I met a Mexican girl who couldn't speak English. Then I met B_____, an American lad, 15 years old, who couldn't read English! The patience of the students was infinite. They reminded me of a herd of sheep; the counselors – of even-tempered, fairly intelligent sheep dogs.

" . . . low class kids . . . are helpless in the mesh of middle-class administrative procedure and are rapidly neutralized and eliminated by it . . . They get out as quickly as they can, often a good deal worse for the experience." Today I heard this idea from Edgar Friedenberg's, *The Vanishing Adolescent* (Dell Laurel edition, p. 112) expressed in the teacher's cafeteria. A new-this-semester teacher was unhappy with her students' conduct and thought that someone should "do something about them." Pat told her, "The system will." End of conversation.

I am seriously beginning to doubt the value of "labeling" Spanish-speaking children as automatically having extra, bigger problems, when often the label does more harm than good. The teacher, especially, has to be careful that group labels don't brand individual children. I feel the same way about comments made in cumulative files – they can be helpful or narrow one's view of a child.

From the point of view of many teachers I've been around, their responsibility is to train the deprived child to function under middle class standards. Little attention or respect is paid to the values and standards the child brings with him other than references such as "undesirable."

It would seem to me that if we are to be successful as educators we must begin by respecting the child for what he has and, rather than dismiss these qualities, we must help the child build upon them. And at the same time, we must build upon our own values and knowledge about ourselves and others.

If we accept all the theories and cliche's about the Negro family and the life of the ghetto, we'll never see the people we are trying to reach and who are trying to reach us.

The Teaching Process

. . . education should not just be learning facts and shaping attitudes, but children should think of themselves as "makers, as well as products, of nature and culture" and of the new system. Education should have as its central concern the shaping of our cultural purposes.

I think when students get into college they suddenly realize this and this is why there is so much activity for rights and change on college campuses. Up until then students must not create new ideas, just learn the old. This should not be! Children from the very start should feel responsible for a better way of doing things.

(Staff Comment: I agree, and when we foster this, we must also be prepared to live with some of their experimental, wild ideas – be prepared to allow them to make some errors and see and feel the results of their errors.)

I would say first that a teacher is primarily a transmitter of experience. It is a teacher's priviledge to present the world as he knows it, and people as he has come to understand them, before his pupils.

As part of that task she should provide experiences which increase the child's vision to see people as fellowmen and the world as a common possession for mutual advantage. And ultimately the teacher should direct her pupils to recognize and utilize their own experiences to the fullest value. Eventually, the integration of these experiences should be used to create a pattern of total thinking–seeing the total picture.

The teacher should be constantly aware of the values the learner is creating for himself. The teacher's responsibility should be to help the child keep those values harmonious with one another and with what we call reality.

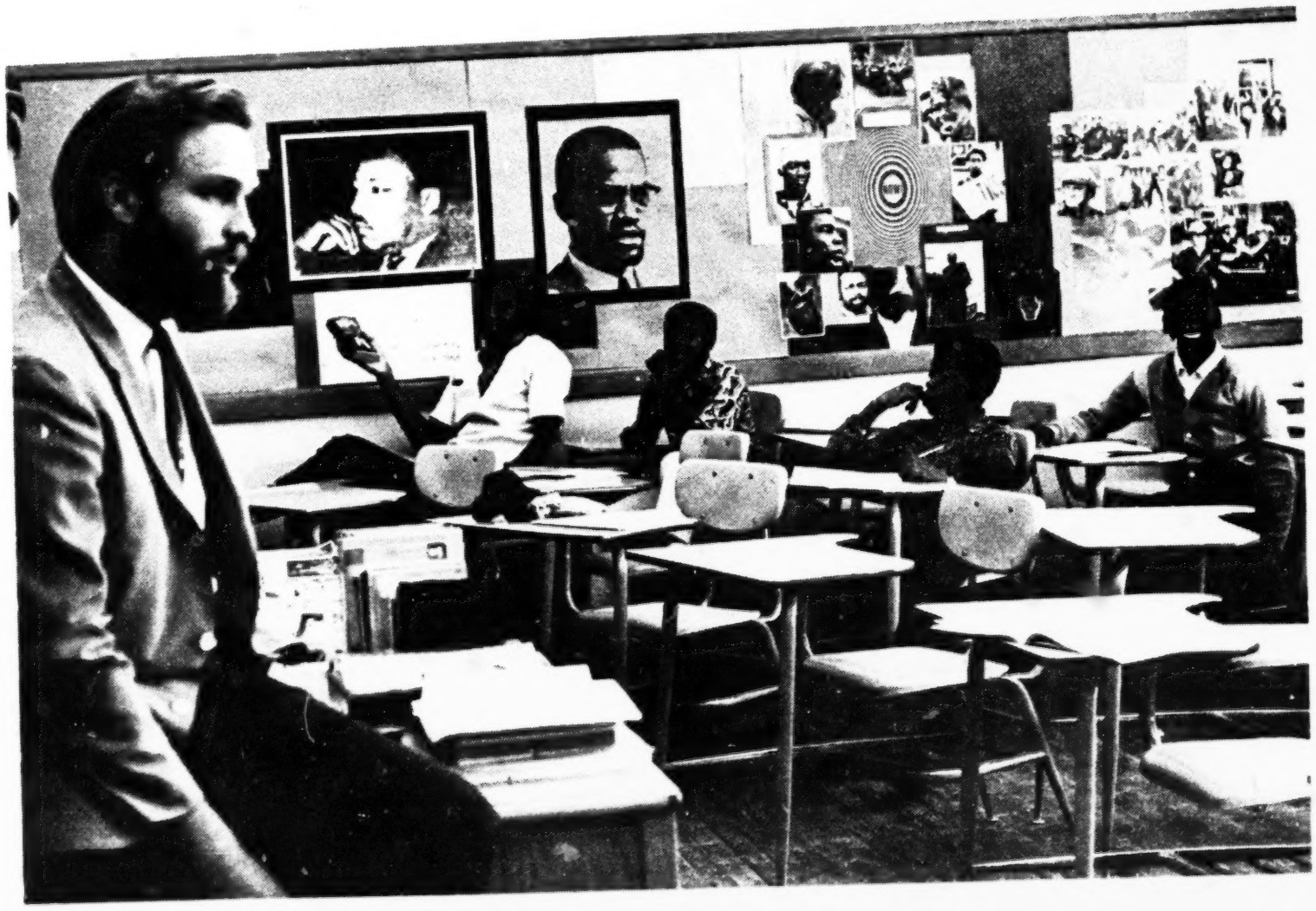
And above all else, the teacher must never let learning be a one-way process.

We should help each student recognize his potential in all directions and offer him some guidelines so that he can decide just which potential will be most useful to him now and in his future. This must be done, however, in such a way that the door is never closed to new directions and possibilities.

If students could realize at much earlier age than I did that grades are not at all the most important thing in education, I think a great step will have been taken towards the real meaning of education.

Is it right to try to change someone's behaviour? Is that education? I think there is much more and that this (behavioural change) definition is not nearly the best short definition of education.

. . . However, when we attempt to instill in a child "pride" in terms of being a Negro, I think we often fail to understand a very basic fact about identity – it is not enough to offer a person an identity as a member of a particular group – what he wants and what he needs is identity as a person. Certainly, it is important that a child have pride in his heritage, but I think such pride must be regarded as a starting point in developing personal pride. It is not enough to tell a child that Dr. King was a great man and a Negro. What we must help every child learn and believe is that he, too, can be a great man. Race or group pride is only valuable to the extent that it enlarges the individual.



I was walking out to my car today at noon and noticed Y, one of the girls in my class, skipping along the sidewalk with apparently no intention of going home for lunch. I had observed her outside like this on other noon recesses and decided to watch her to see what she was really doing. I stood by my car until she noticed me and began to walk across the street, looking back at me still. It seemed a good opportunity to find out if she was or was not eating lunch at home, so I followed her on foot. I finally caught up with her and as we walked together, I discovered that when she went home to eat no one was there and she fixed her own lunch. No wonder there was little incentive to go home! I left her at her house, walked back to school, and five minutes later Y reappeared! I was really curious now as to how she was spending her lunch hours and invited her to eat lunch with me in my car.

In the classroom, Y is continually on the defensive, talks "baby talk" and keeps one finger in her mouth all the time. While eating with me, she spoke freely and never once put her finger in her mouth. She seemed very pleased that a teacher should be interested in her outside of the classroom. I not only learned all about her family (her mother calls her the "baby" of the family), but gained a new respect for her acceptance of responsbility. She had walked over seven blocks home to lunch only to find a refrigerator locked, had then fixed a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, and hurried back hoping to find me around to talk to.

I believe Y wants and needs friends. She is a "loner" among her peers – but is treated like a baby at home and thus has come to expect everyone else to do things for her. Yet when no one else is around, she very quickly adapts herself to the situation and performs well independently. Experiences like this today, with me, seemed to bolster her eagerness to express herself because she felt that I was interested in her as an individual. She saw me as a friend and I gained insight and respect for Y through an experience which I hope will transfer its gains into the classroom. This seems to me to be an example of the importance of relating yourself with your children in other ways than as the teacher from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

What does a teacher do when one of her pupils loves her? R informed me that he loves me even if I'm not Negro. He has been constantly with me–holding my hand, pulling at my arm, drawing pictures for me, doing anything to please me. He won't go out for recess unless I go with him. He listens to a point but obeys out of love–not respect. What am I to do?

Especially for a teacher in the "culturally-deprived" school, it seems to me to be extremely important to be alert to outside influences on the child's behavior in class. It reminds me of K's not being able to read well or speak-out in class because he was too hungry to think of anything else, and too ashamed of his torn shirt, ripped pants, and no socks.

This past week has brought forth a very rewarding relationship for me personally. I have a class of mostly boys and therefore find that communication is doubly difficult because I can't talk to them much about cars and sports since I don't know much about them. However, one boy has made an attempt to just talk with me, coming in after school and early to class. We hit upon fishing and hunting as common interests. He was surprised and thrilled that I knew about both, had done both and would share stories with him. I brought him some of my husband's *Outdoor Life* magazines to read for today's free reading period and he devoured them–he spent the entire hour reading. At the end of the period he told me about one of the stories he had read and in a very subtle way made sure I would bring the magazines again.

The pleasure and benefit in this experience is threefold: 1) the new relationship between myself and a student which has emerged in a kind of friendship where the teacher-student roles have broken down somewhat; 2) the result of this on the student's classroom behavior from disruptive to cooperative and even interested sometimes; 3) the fact that the student is reading and enjoying it–if not Shakespeare, at least not comic books.

At today's teachers meeting there was much discussion on how to cope with the truancy problems. I was amazed when not one suggestion was made concerning the fact that maybe the teachers could improve their own methods or make their classes more interesting. The only suggestions made were on how to lessen the paper work, for example, by more effective organization, by the use of more machines, etc. Not much real human interest, if you ask me . . .

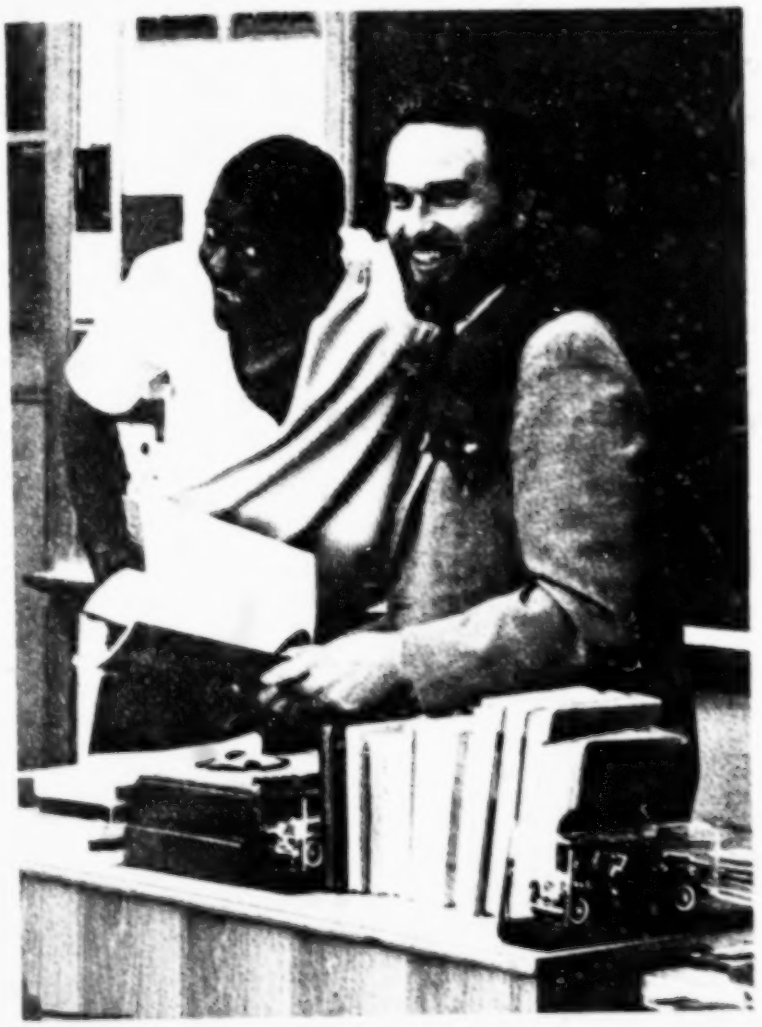
Teachers and schools tend to mistake good behaviour for good character. What they prize above all else is docility, suggestibility, the child who will do what he is told, or, even better, the child who will do what is wanted without even having to be told. They value most in children what children least value in themselves. Small wonder that their effort to build character is such a failure; they don't know it when they see it!

My students are very real to me. They are the most real of anybody or anything I have been with in a long time. This is part of what frustrates me at times. I cannot deal with them, nor do I want to deal with them as a sea of faces. Each is an individual, with individual wants and needs. But it is hard for them and for me, and, I gather, for others, when thirty individuals are in a room trying to work together.

Pertaining to notes on *How Children Fail*, by John Holt. This was an excellent book for teachers (and teacher candidates) because of the many specific classroom incident descriptions and the integrating overview of the educational system and how it fails to meet the specific needs of the students. Generally, the theme could be transposed on to Hentoffs title, *Our Children Are Dying* and be best described as *Our Children Are Afraid.* The Holt book says it is the fault of an educational system based on right answers. We, the educators, are dishonest with students. We teach them not what we think but what we feel they should think—to the point that they learn to respond "dishonestly" not spontaneously, telling us what they think we want to hear.

An example from my own class which backs up this theory is an essay assignment I gave. I asked each student to describe how he felt when he had either been in or witnessed a fight. They all wrote avidly describing in detail their fight. The assignment failed to bring forth description of many feelings but rather a blow by blow physical description of the fight. The one feeling that was often expressed was tagged on at the end of the enthusiastic description like a P.S. on a bad letter apologizing for it. Often they put "I felt bad" or "I was sorry to have been in a fight" (even when they had won). A few honestly said something to the effect that they hated the guy they were fighting at the moment and were glad they beat him up. Now I'm sure some were sorry they had been ego forced into a fight. But the discussion that ensued in the classroom as I read the papers aloud led me to believe that the "felt bad" was tagged on for me because it was right to feel that way for a teacher . . . so we wrote and re-wrote about fights from various angles till the students finally realized they could describe their feelings of nausea, hatred, fear, etc. It was a real job to break through "right" attitudes that are put on for teachers. And once broken through it does not stay this way. The students are so used to the right answer method that requires little mental exercise that they have become lazy and have accepted the feed it and regurgitate method of learning. Thinking is not usually part of the expected classroom response and it is really difficult to get the students to respect their own ideas as valid. This is one of my goals in my classroom. The text I'm using helps because it has no right answers and requires the students to develop their own rules and reasons.

Last week my master teacher told me that she thought I had started to go up hill finally. Unfortunately, for me to teach well I must be in a frenzy comparable to that of the students. When I'm angry and yelling, the kids listen. When I'm calm, cool, and logical, they don't listen. I wish I could be tougher—today one of the girls started calling me by my first name—at first I thought I wasn't hearing right—what could I say?



I keep worrying that I have done irrevocable harm to my class. They seem to trust me now; however, they also seem to feel more at ease taking advantage of my good nature.

L is still in class. I'm soft and Miss C is hard. Sometimes I wonder if I am too easy going to make a good teacher? Then again, I wonder if the hard liners are really successful. They seem to actually be afraid of the students.

We had a spontaneous, unplanned, terrific science lesson today! I was struggling to set up the overhead projector for a writing lesson and could not get the light to focus on the screen. In all my frustration, I began talking about the projector. One comment led to another and an hour later we concluded the discussion! During that hour the children examined every part of the projector for its function, even to the inside wires and fan. They discovered for themselves how it works and I'm sure know more about it than most teachers! Even I found some new parts on it which I had not seen before. It was one of those rare lessons that "just happens" and I was caught by the class wonder and excitement of discovering something new. We learned more in that hour than we had in the past few days. And, I'm sure it will remain with them longer too. If only I could plan lessons like this one!

We have been busy at nursery school making Christmas decorations and trimmings. Usually we do these and put them up while the children are napping. What amazes me is that on awakening the children immediately notice any change and go over to them and "oh" and "ah." Then we can explain to them what they are. How keen their senses are, and if we could just keep this awareness alive always. Perhaps a few changes in our high school decor might spark things up!

Children are much the same everywhere. If a child points to a darting fish and wants to know I eagerly answer every query—for several hours earlier sitting in my classroom there may have sat a youth who no longer asks the question "Why?"

The 1st graders never cease to be interesting with their new discoveries. When I come in they always have something to tell me—a whole new world has been opened to them by a trip with their family or a new toy at home.

What a day!! If I say so myself I had the best language arts lesson I've had all year. It was a creative writing class. I gave the children the directions and the topic of the assignment "Write What the Word which I write on the board means to you" and the directions were after the word is on the board, no questions can be asked. They were all sure I was going to write the word *quiet* on the board. The word I used was *Negro.* When my students realized what the word was the sound in the classroom was of shock and anger. "How can you do this to us?" Who do you think you are, Miss D?" But after they settled down, the class wrote some of the best papers I have seen and each was different and honest. As I read them orally some got applause, while others got boos. But they realized the objective of the lesson. They realized that they each had their own conception and their own feelings. Also they were able to hear other people's opinions on why they are proud of being Negro. I think it may start some more individual thinking. This assignment also opened up the children in discussion with me on the subject of Negroes. The rest of the afternoon we discussed life in general centering around the papers. They asked what I was and I told them I was a D.I.C. – Dark Italian Catholic, they got a kick out of that. I hope to get all these papers compiled and dittoed off. I know I want to keep a copy.

Today I tried out, for the first time, the new "nap mats" we had been making in class. My idea was to experiment with a rest period of having the children rest on the floor instead of with their heads down on their tables. We cut brown wrapping paper to the size of the longest child and traced each child's feet and hands on the paper. Then in large letters, I wrote the child's name across the top of the paper. This was all done in various colored felt pens. The children were curious about what we were doing with the paper but not fully aware of how we would use it. I hoped to provide a more restful rest time with these mats and so today we finally tried them for the first time. It was chaotic arranging the children on the floor but slowly the noise became more excitement than confusion. I watched as some children, who had never tried to write their names or shown any interest in it, eagerly traced the large letters of their names over and over. And then some began comparing names and similar letters. Others were busy reading each other's names out loud. And Carlos, of course, oblivious to anyone else, tried to fit his feet and hands into the outlines on the paper! He was all wrapped around himself but having a great time trying the impossible! I could hardly keep from laughing at the humorous situation and yet I also admired his persistence in trying. I really feel that these mats turned into a fantastic learning experience for all. I have little doubt that when the newness wears off, our rest time will be successful and relaxing.

I feel listless and beat. Before class I decided to have a "philosophical" type class, i.e. what is Geometry? Why take it? How about Grades? But I just took things as they came and sat down allowing long silent stretches to develop. The class got sort of squirmy during the silent stretches and the tension was felt by everyone but me because I was out of it and didn't have the energy to feel tense. I ran out of the three questions above and just kind of sat, they looked up kind of nervously. I just started talking about do you know each other and how do I fit into this class? (They all look at me wherever I go and focus their attention on me trying to avoid their fellow students. My judgment, it seems, is more compassionate than the judgment of their peers.) The amazing thing was that as I talked and confronted the class not as a class but as one individual with whom I really expose myself, they responded with respect, not only for me but, since I was encourageing them to direct their attention toward their peers, they also seemed to look around the class with new trust and respect. They all kind of acted awkward, as if they were meeting new people.

After this we started doing homework problems. I gave my book (with the answers in it) to a student and they progressed haltingly without me. They were aware of what a "teacher" meant and felt the absence very much. But they were also aware of the fact (most of them) that they could (and did) do the problems without *me*. My class was getting the feeling of taking their education into their own hands, and how group effort could help. Once again honesty and belief in integrity are proven to work.

My Math class was really great today. The lesson was on writing checks and keeping track of one's checking account. I had dittoed off sheets of checks (Elmhurst Bank) and a chart where they could keep the record of their new bank balance. I also had made a large check which I put on the board illustrating how a check should be made out. (It was made payable to Soul Brothers and P won it in a draw– the majority of the class wanted to have it.) Everyone in the class very easily settled down to doing the assignment which was to write about 20 checks and keep a record of each one. This lesson was very applicable to their lives and they could easily see the necessity of learning this skill; therefore, they got very involved in doing it well. There were no discipline problems and there were even long spans of absolute quietness. At the end of class, most of them asked me to keep their unfinished papers in my drawer so they wouldn't lose them. And C, the girl who had previously told me that her parents are totally disgusted with school and don't want to have anything to do with it, told me that she was going to take her paper home and show her mother! This lesson not only created a lot of interest, it was also an interesting way of appraoching the review of subtracting decimals and writing out numbers in words, filling out forms, and writing cents as fractions. I felt like a good Math teacher today.

Had a *think lab* today on the Respiratory and Circulatory system; it was good, and as a result of it, I think I may have hit upon the root of the trouble of one of my biggest discipline problems regarding one of the boys. He asked me to take his pulse, as he couldn't find it and when I took it, it was well over 100. He has the slightly protruding eyes, typical of the hyperactive thyroid. As it happened this boy's mother was the only parent of my class, who came to the school Open House; I wasn't there so I called her and made an appointment to see her in a couple of days. She was a lovely woman and I talked with her for an hour. I asked her if John had always been so restless, etc. She said she started noticing a change in him during the 9th grade. Apparently he has been having trouble in all his classes and she was very concerned about him. I told her about his pulse rate and recommended that she take him to see a doctor. She said she belonged to Kaiser and it could be easily arranged. She said she would let me know. I haven't heard from her yet.

We had a fiery legislative session today as bills were argued and fought for. The one causing the most excitement was N's bill proposing to outlaw all strikes and boycotts in high schools and colleges. The other bill causing equal discussion was a proposal that jurors be selected more from the lower classes or more specifically from the neighborhood. Discussion continued on down the halls and I just hope they have understanding second period teachers.

The Story of a First Grader

10/23 We have a boy in our first grade class who has an I.Q. of 140 and is taller than the rest of the boys. He knew how to write before he entered first grade. His reading and math level is about 2nd or 3rd grade. He knows a lot besides what he is supposed to learn at school. He knows how to use a slide rule. He can write, but he doesn't want to write the way the teacher tells him to. He said her way is babyish, his way is prettier. The teacher puts him off to sit all by himself because he moves around too much. They sent him to 2nd grade for reading but the teacher did not want him because he disturbed the class with too many questions. He is "naughty, immature, impossible" – bad, period. In the classroom with 31 students the teacher cannot possibly find time to solve G's problem. Is he bright? He has an I.Q. of 140. Is he immature? He can't follow instructions and act like the rest of the children. The way we are teaching him, are we wasting his talent or are we trying to conform him to become one of the "common men"? At this point, I tend to agree with Friedenberg's ideal public school system. Who knows, G might fit into one of these schools for talented youth and be much happier there.

10/30 G came back to school today after a few days absence due to illness. I have to admit, the class seemed too quiet and "uninteresting" without him. He sure is a very "notorious" boy. Several teachers mentioned about "he's back,"–he pushed somebody in the yard during the 10:45 coffee time. Underneath the tone, I could feel that they are glad that they don't have G in their classes and they pity us because we have him. In all their conversations, I haven't heard once about how to help him. I can't deny that he is a problem: he is talkative, he doesn't follow instructions and he can't sit still. But that doesn't mean that he is bad or impossible. Right now, as it is, we have already branded him as one of the "outlaws." We have formed an impression in our minds that, although he is bright, he is immature. He doesn't try, and his behavior is the worst in the whole primary. How can he have a chance? I have already branded him. No matter what class or what grade he will be in later – the teachers already have a bad impression of him. It really is not fair.

In a classroom of 31, a teacher can't possibly take care of all the students. She has to pay most attention to the majority of the class. G, he is an outcast. He sits there getting bored for he could do all those "baby stuff" already, so we give him a 3rd grade math book or a 3rd grade reader. He still just sits there day-dreaming without doing a simple problem.

Today I went over to talk to him. I told him I would time him and I would like to find out how well he could do his work. It took him exactly 15 minutes to do 15 problems and I thought that was very good. He said he could even do better, if the rest of the class was not making so much noise.

I don't have any answers for him except I will try my best to win him over. I would like to get his confidence. I would try to use more positive reinforcement, the opposite of what he is getting now. I also would like to teach him alone for a period of time. By giving him my whole attention, I wonder what response he would give us.

11/27 A psychologist friend of mine, suggested we should try a new approach to reach G, or a new way to motivate him to do more in the classroom. Right now, G does not learn anything in school. Sometimes we would forget completely about him sitting at a corner table all by himself. He has no interest in his study. He comes to school one day and out the next. This psychologist suggested that we find out what G likes most to do, – it might be a project of

putting a hundred pieces of a puzzle together or perhaps assembling a toy airplane model. G is not supposed to enjoy doing the project until he has finished all his work or what he is supposed to do. According to my friend, G is mentally like an 8 or 9 year old, but socially, he is just 3 years old. Somehow, someway, we have to put these two extremes together.

G. lay himself on the floor with legs popping up on the table today. Mrs. C told him about three times to sit up before he got up to sit on the chair. Then three minutes later, he was on the floor again. Mrs. C hit him lightly on the leg to make him behave. G said, "You are funny." This time it took him only one minute to go back to the floor show. Mrs. C turned him over and really gave it to him. He was stunned for awhile, then he said, "You are not funny at all." Mrs. C said, "I did not mean it to be funny." He then said "Yeah!" Mrs. C said "How are you supposed to address a teacher?" G said, "There are several ways. I can say 'Yes ma'am' or I can say 'Yes, sweetie' or 'Yes, cutie'." This time it was Mrs. C's turn to be stunned. As for me, I could hardly keep a straight face.

Mrs. C does not think that what my friend suggested will work for G at all. He is just not the type who could sit long enough to do anything. But I am not satisfied until I have tried it. I will first start with a simple airplane model so that he will not get frustrated if it is too difficult for him to handle.

1/9 G has behaved beautifully lately, especially during science period. He did not push other children when standing in line or walk around the room whenever he felt like it. Even though he still won't finish his assignment, he has been participating more with the whole class in discussion or activities. Yesterday, when he came in the morning, he showed me some of his toy dinosaurs. I took up the opportunity to ask him to tell us something about those animals. He has quite a knowledge about them—this group of extinct reptiles.

G lisps a little bit—likes to mumble long sentences. The children began to giggle and laugh even before he uttered the word "dinosaur." You could tell by the tone —the way of this laughter— they already sensed that G was not one of them. (He was branded for an outcast by the teachers long ago. Last week, I overheard some of the children tell Mrs. H, the substitute teacher, that Mrs. C put G to sit by himself in front because he is bad.) I stopped the class right away and told G that I was sorry that we were being rude to interrupt him. Then I told the class that they should all listen to G because he knew something about dinosaurs that they didn't. I let G talk and show his collection for 5 minutes. He was quite contented after that. He was a perfect boy the rest of the day--while I was there in the morning, anyway.

I mentioned the Science Fair to be held next month to the class during science period today. I told them I would like them to think about some projects for that occasion. G raised his hand and said he might do something on dinosaurs. I was so happy, I could have hugged him!

I can't claim that I have found a way to win him over already, but I do feel that with a little patience and love, I have gained a little ground. I have tried to treat him like the rest of the children; I have tried to involve him more in all the activities. Before he came in at 10 o'clock in the morning, I moved his table and chair so that he can see the blackboard and the teachers, instead of facing the wall as if we were punishing him all the time. I am crossing my fingers, holding my breath and I am praying and hoping.

1/19 I was ill and away from class for 2 days. I was shocked to find out that it was my last day with the class yesterday. I just couldn't leave the children like that, so I bought 32 ball point pens and spent the afternoon with them. I met some of the children out in the yard. They held on to my hands, hugged me and kissed me. J carried my basket; N carried my handbag. Then I got

my biggest reward when I went into the room with them. Each of them wrote me a nice letter wishing me to be happy in my next class and saying how much they enjoyed the singing and science period. They did the job all by themselves without any help from us. Even G finished writing his letters which was very unusual. I had never seen him finish writing anything except one science class. I was the happiest person in the world. I probably did not do a perfect job in reading, but I did get them to love me.

I was quite upset by one little incident though. The children were sitting in front of the room studying about a story in the social study book. G did not turn to the right page. He got his book taken away and sent back to his seat. I felt sick all of a sudden. He probably couldn't or hadn't found the right page. Shouldn't we be a little bit lenient? He sat alone with his head down with nothing to do the first period. Then had to do the same the 2nd period. My heart ached for him and yet I couldn't do anything. I had to remind myself that he was being punished then—I had no business to interfere. Then soon, J's mother came in to observe the class. I took advantage of the confusion and went to get 2 books from the book shelf—gave them to him. How long are you supposed to expect a child to sit still facing the wall with nothing to do? He is doing nothing, learning nothing in school. How can we motivate him and make the school a place, an exciting and challenging place for him? We really have failed him. How I wish I could have another week with him. I was hoping we might be able to do some projects together about the dinosaurs. How frustrating when you feel that there is a job yet to be done!

Teachers are...

I was on my way to the office when I came across Mr. T trying to get a large, angry boy to the office. He pulled me into it by asking me to be a witness when he told Mr. P what the boy was doing: namely, looking into classroom windows and ignoring Mr. T. I can't see using other teachers in this way, but Mr. T didn't give me a choice. What happened was an example of a common student complaint: "No one listens to our side of the story."

Mr. T. was very emotional and angry because the boy refused to go directly to the office. The boy was equally upset because someone had gone into his gym locker and he was trying to find the guilty boy when Mr. T found him. Mr. T was so enraged at being disobeyed that he didn't even listen to why the boy was looking into classrooms or why he was upset. I left when Mr. P began his you-must-respect-teachers-here-at-school speech. What he said probably did the boy as much good as a you-must-respect-the-students-here-at-school speech would have done Mr. T.

". . . a difference in age does not necessarily represent a different need for respect."

An observation: teaching in the black community is a confrontation between ego (the teacher) and pride (the students). In most cases it is just a head-on clash which benefits no one. The solution lies in a compromise-not between the student and teacher, but between the student and his pride OR the teacher and his ego. Since asking the student to give up or even compromise his pride, is working to the disadvantage of the teacher's higher goals (student responsibility, student involvement) as well as the student's principles we the teachers must compromise our great egos.

Compromise your ego, teacher
Compromise your ego, teacher

A curious thing is happening to me – I'm getting to really like the troublemakers more than the few students who are continually kowtowing.

Kozol, in his book, *Death at an Early Age,* stated, "The slowness of change is always respectable and reasonable in the eyes of the ones who are only watching; it is a different matter for the ones who are in pain." (p. 84) How true these words are! Kozol was referring to the lack of interest of the reading teacher. She would only say "times are changing." Last year I would have been a watcher waiting patiently for the change, but now I'm the one in pain. I'm frustrated that there aren't enough books and the right books for these students. My hands seem tied because I'm not able to find the material that would please or interest my students. It's true that times are changing, but when?

It took me awhile to decide what impressed me about Mr. R (master teacher) but I think it's this: He has the kind of relationship with his students which I'd like to have with mine. To me, a positive, mutually accepting relationship sets the stage for any learning that will occur during class time, and is also a factor in the students' attitudes toward school. The communication that took place between this teacher and his students, not only in the classroom, but also in the halls between classes, reflected a mutual respect and honesty and, on the part of the students, admiration. I'm not in a position to assess the learning that may or may not be going on in his classes but I'm convinced that the existence of a true dialogue between the students and the teacher creates a positive learning atmosphere.

Many of his classes' successful learning experiences, if not all of them, can be attributed to this relationship, and their failures may be fewer because of it. It goes without saying that he also knows his subject and how to present it.

My present view of teaching:

36 pupils, 1 teacher – all being propelled, motivated, powered by the adrenalin of the teacher. And I just ran out! Is this where the "professionalism" thing comes in? As a back-up?

Only one quarter and a week left. The time has gone quickly. I hope I haven't permanently damaged my students. If there are many others like me involved in their education – no wonder they are termed culturally disadvantaged!

A good teacher: *(composite picture)*

- respects children and appreciates individual personalities
- trusts children
- bases her own authority on respect rather than fear
- gives children the security of consistent expectations; gives reason for these expectations
- is patient
- keeps teaching a personal process; speaks to individuals, not just the group; is sensitive to each child's needs
- always tries to use a positive approach and avoids negative suggestions
- presents criticism constructively
- encourages the children to think with her; says just enough to furnish a springboard for them to go further
- uses a surprise element
- uses a lot of enthusiasm and expression – dramatizes occasionally
- paces the class effectively
- encourages self-discipline; looks for and expects cooperation, helpfulness and independence; spends the time building not tearing down
- displays the junk brought in by kids (especially living things) and displays their work
- laughs often with her class
- offers each child status and lets him know he is an indispensible and valuable member of the class
- looks for the child's abilities (his disabilities will be apparent)
- keeps in contact with parents
- is fair, firm and consistent

It finally struck me that these kids were not even born in 1954 when Little Rock was put on the map, and during the past few years when they have been becoming more aware of what is going on around them – Black Power is what they have been hearing. Black Power is a great thing if it can continue to be militant without violence. The Afro-Americans are beginning to realize that they have to help each other. There are few others who are willing or able to give them the help they need.

• • •

I've been talking to the art student teacher. He thinks it will be eventually futile for whites to teach blacks. I rebel at this as much as some bigot saying that his lily-white children can't be taught by Negroes. If it ends up that only blacks teach blacks and only whites teach whites and that American society is really separated into two societies, like the President's Commission on Civil Disorder predicted, then the struggle for racial equality and civil rights has been perverted and the myth of race has been further perpetuated.

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(From a report of a workshop at which Herbert Kohl, author of *36 Children*, was a guest speaker:) A sideline was his remark on the "teaching mentality" which reminded me of the "police mentality" – never turn in another teacher or disagree with them in front of kids. The question is: do we support the system or do we trust a child and live up to our own commitments as teachers and as human people?

Police brutality and teacher cruelty and incompetence are closely connected. As an officer is toughened and embittered by the bad experiences he undergoes in the line of duty – so a teacher is transformed from a benevolent human being into a calculating machine. Cops and teachers are casualties of our social system.

• • •

What a terrifying day. I'll never forget it! I found myself running scared out of East Oakland and afraid to look a black person in the face. I really felt alienated from other human beings because of their color and nothing else. It shook me deeply to think that Martin Luther King's death could so easily cause a city – a nation – to erupt into a tense, hot volcano of emotion. I sincerely believe that whites and blacks have to live *together* in our world and in Oakland, so if we ever get the hatred out of our bloodstreams, maybe rational thinking can help bring us together. But I am intensely shaken when I find *myself* running scared from other human beings. I don't know what this next week will bring in action, but it will bring many serious moments of deep consideration on my part as to what I am doing in the Oakland schools . . . and in OFC.

There's much more to teaching and being in OFC than a job commitment or even a "helping" commitment. I think I believe in something more akin to a "people" commitment.

Community Involvement

Registered voters this afternoon. Many women want to wait for their husbands to register. Perhaps they were not sure what I was selling.

The area (my precinct) I am working in seems quite well integrated – even well balanced the way every neighborhood should naturally be. However, more than once I have been "taken into the confidence" of the whites I am registering to listen to their complaints about the "niggers" and about their personal plans and dreams to get out of this neighborhood. None of these people in my precinct (blacks or whites) are the poorest or the least well educated. All seemed to have a reasonable amount of education – quite enough to express themselves well and read and write, also to know what is going on. (That doesn't mean they showed any particular concern about national or international affairs – just that they knew the situation.)

The purpose of this journal insert is specifically to note my observation that even though this precinct is well-balanced racially and somewhat economically balanced (class), there is a great deal of hostility and prejudice on the part of the whites. (Of course, the negroes would not have expressed any feeling they might have had about the whites to me.) I saw mostly white kids playing with other whites and black with black even though they lived in the same apartment or on the same block.

• • •

I can honestly say that working at Arroyo was quite worthwhile, not just for all the art ideas I learned from them, but because it gave me an opportunity to work with a group of teenagers, to listen to their gripes and begin to understand their bitterness. In this way I could go back to the classroom with a better understanding of what needed to be taught especially in the subject of human relations.

• • •

The importance of this evening to me was an incident that was "very OFC."It reinforced so beautifully the importance of teachers participating in and being part of the community where they teach. My husband and I went together to see the Blackstone Rangers. J knew he might run into some of his students and was a little apprehensive about the reception he would get–depending upon who he ran into. (I too, thought I would see some of my students but none were there that I could tell). As we entered the JKF door, sure enough, "Well, hi, Mr. ––" a voice greeted him. The student was genuinely pleased to see J attending this particular performance. It so impressed him that he broadcast the news to the class the next Monday. A few others greeted J too. One student even whipped out his history book. Imagine, he had taken it with him! After the performance a loud voice came from the excited crowd, "Hey Mr. G." We turned and a boy said, "I'll have to give you an A for this."

Day Care Center – it is interesting to watch the teachers change their approaches as they go from child to child putting on shoes or serving milk. With some they are firm, with others encouraging and with still others, joking. At first, this seemed like favoritism, but as I got to know the children better I realized that they were relating to each in a manner which was best understood by the child. Each child operated best within this atmosphere. How great it would be if teachers in the higher grades could use the flexible method of relating to each student, but as Friedenberg pointed out, "our teaching methods are geared to the mass education technique."

The craft teacher took some boys on a field trip to the Art Museum so there were not many at the school today. I checked over supplies which are very slim and talked to some of the staff about teaching approaches. It seems to me that if we could get a working machine – printing press, key punch machine, tabulator – any machine which the real industrial world uses and for which it needs operators – and teach the boys to run such a machine, figure real math problems in relation to the machine, and write real work orders, progress reports, summaries of machine operation – then the boys could see some purpose in what they are doing.

Though they don't turn out very well for meetings, members of the L. Cooperative Buying Club are certainly turning in the orders! Today we did $340 worth of business, with 30 members participating.

As for me, I think I'm learning one of the real values of patience – that is, the reward that comes when one holds back and allows a new group, which is also new to the process of working cooperatively on something which belongs to them, to struggle with the various knotty problems which arise and work through to feasible solutions. My role has been chiefly that of "question-asker," and I feel that has been a real contribution.

Today was my third day of helping out at the continuation school. The craft teacher has not been there since I came, so I'm not sure that what I'm doing is what they've been doing. However, the boys have made some interesting wall plaques and earrings out of the meager supplies on hand. Extra varnish, stain and other supplies from home have been welcome. The director of the Boys Club is very generous and laughingly says he has to take another job in the afternoon to support his morning job at the school. After snooping around a bit, I found that there are wonderful molds and a kiln (not sure it works). So yesterday afternoon, I visited the crafts classes at C. School, and learned how to use the molds. I have done clay modelling and operated a kiln but only with small objects such as jewelry. So we'll be set to go on some clay work soon. Hopefully, the shop work can be integrated with classroom work. If a boy there could say, "I completed a worthwhile project; I can tell about what I did. I figured my own measurements" then that is good . . . for they are a restless, nervous group of boys. They are forever moving and getting nowhere.

In conjunction with the vocational unit now being taught in the English classes in junior high, various field trips have been planned for the 9th graders. The teacher and I took 12 girls to a beauty salon on 55th St. owned and operated by Mrs. BD. Mrs. D had agreed to speak to the girls about training and vocational opportunities in this field. We transported the girls in our own cars and I took the route most familiar to me which led by the tree area of Montclair via the Warren Freeway. As we came to the Montclair area, the girls started talking about how awful it would be to live here among all the trees and overgrown weeds. They said they would be afraid . . . of what? Of the general atmosphere of being surrounded, hiden in seclusion, and of falling trees. An interesting reaction, I thought.

The tour itself was successful in that Mrs. D turned out to be a Negro woman, very well-known, and proficient in her career. She showed a filmstrip on makeup and then she talked to the girls informally while she did a lady's hair. She was open and eager for questions and quite frank with the girls. The girls, however, on their best behavior, were too quiet and rarely ventured forth a question or opinion while we were there. On the way home they talked constantly about what they had seen and learned – thank goodness! From their quietness, I thought they were bored! I was personally most happy about the fact that the girls were able to see a successful Negro woman at work in the vocation where they too might wind up.

The Teenage Mothers' coffee and play hour this morning was, briefly and bluntly, a flop. The one thing that has come out of these profound failures to organize this group is my own realization that I have gone about it wrong. The girls did not know me, had mostly never heard of OFC, and

really had no reason to respond to my personal invitations (or bribes).

I really believe that things that are being done in the community should be run and organized by the people of that community. If we can provide a little help when needed, then that should be our role. I did indeed forget my role in my previous attempts to start this group. Now I will be meeting with M. on Tuesday afternoons to see what she wants to do. *(Staff Comment: I wonder about the self-image of these girls. If they are ambivalent about accepting motherhood with all its cultural and practical implications, this may keep them away from an organization in which that role is emphasized.)*

During the past couple of weeks, especially, the only thing I can think of to write about is working on "In White America." This experience was worth all the effort I put into it because of the success of the play itself and the good turnout we had. I was very surprised, though, at the lack of interest in the play on the part of OFC members. It definitely gave me a better idea which people were really willing to work when there was something worth working for!

I heard a couple of members talking the day of the play and saying that they didn't think bringing plays to East Oakland was a good idea because we shouldn't try to change the people's culture. If they were interested enough in plays, they'd go to the city to see them, etc. Also, "In White America" probably wasn't an appropriate play to bring to East Oakland because it appealed more to whites than blacks. I know the person who said this had not seen the play himself.

Well, the only thing to do when in doubt of success is to at least try and see what the results are. That's just what we did and I hope we—or next year's OFC members can continue bringing more plays to East Oakland.

After seminar, I went to visit one of the Cottage (home for abandoned children) kids who is in the hospital recovering from jaundice. W. looks in pretty good shape now. He's been reading a lot of books while he's been sick and h[illegible] had to tell me about them. He's very good at discerning the messages in books. He doesn't just talk about what happened in the story, like many kids, but he talks about the characters and how they change or mature as the story progresses and he talks about the author's attitude towards life. He was telling me that he read *Of Human Bondage* and that he remembered that the author said that you don't really appreciate art and beauty until you've suffered. W. agreed with the author because he remembers that he never realized that the sand right next to the ocean was so beautiful and so full of sparkles until one night the hippie village in which he was living was raided and he was sent back to the County institutions.

When I talked with him before he never told me very much about his family and his present detention in Juvenile Hall, but today he did, and I got some conception of suffering he's gone through. His parents separated before he was born and he was tossed back and forth. He's lived on his own – with hippies or supporting himself by working in restaurants. A few weeks ago, at his hearing in which he was named a ward of the Court, the man he thought was his father told him for the first time that he really wasn't his father. It's quite a shock for a 17 year old boy to all of a sudden find out he's illegitimate!

It was kind of depressing during recreation: I was playing 4-square with M (he's bright, quick, a nice kid) T (the insecure, uncoordinated boy who is really improving) and a new girl. We were having a pretty good game then she had to leave because her younger sister was crying by herself in the corner of the adjoining playground. Then a little boy burst into tears when Mr. G., one of the counselors, was talking to him. The poor kid was really upset. Mr. G. put him on his knee and tried to father him. Mr. G is trying to find out what kind of treatment the boy will respond to. Some need pampering and much affection; others need rough and ready big-brother attention.

I wrote a poem this afternoon:

Celebrities cry because
  Of Oscars lost in competition,
Students cry because
  of courses passed and failed,
Lovers cry because
  of love postponed by distance,
Mothers cry because
  of sons dead in Vietnam,
Adults cry because
  of the seeming futility of it all,
But the never justified cries
  are the ones torn
From the hearts of abandoned children.
    They cry
      and shake
    And cry again
      and again
        They tear your heart apart
Because you can never
Completely take the hurt away.

S was really feeling lonely today. Susie is a plain, dull, 16-year old who has been raped several times by relatives. She's been at Juvenile Hall off and on for about six months. S stayed after class and talked quite a bit. I know she wanted to stay and talk all afternoon, but her counselor wouldn't let her as she had to go to another class. I think that especially at a school such as S schedules should be so flexible that a student could stay longer with one teacher if it were needed. Sometimes kids are very hard to turn on and off and there are times when teachers can help a student progress remarkably if allowed to keep a child as long as the child is interested instead of pushing him or her on to another prescheduled class.

12/5

The OFC tutoring program is just getting started and could be very successful. I hope more candidates become interested so that OFC can finally be helping the community. Even tutoring one person, as I'm doing, can be a rewarding experience. I feel that I'm learning a lot about myself and the boy that I'm tutoring.

5/1

This study center needs help. It is not effective as it is now organized. I am going to try to elaborate on some of the problems as I see them.

(1) Students who come are almost all from the elementary grades, but candidates are all (except S) from the secondary part of the program.

(2) We cannot get students to come if there are no tutors here, and we cannot get tutors to come without providing them with tutees. Consequently, we have few students and fewer candidates taking part in the study center.

(3) *Rowdy* elementary students disrupt atmosphere of study.

(4) We need text books, particularly reading and math material for grades 1-9.

5/6 & 7

No one comes. The place is empty. It is daylight till 8-8:30 p.m. I suspect that potential tutees are playing basketball at Tassafaranga. True, there might be some attendance just before the end of school. We need the tutors first, sitting here waiting for people to help. We need to coordinate arrival of the two groups. But if the tutors have to sit for a day or two we can persuade them to come back. If tutees arrive and there are no tutors, they won't come back, and their friends won't come either.

5/15

Lots and lots of tutees. I would suggest leaving the door and blinds open so that the place looks somewhat alive. Worked with teaching machines reading with 1st graders and math with 3 or 4 other elementary kids.

5/17

I suppose this entry could be considered my "final journal entry." Whatever it is considered, it will probably be ear-searing and not very pleasant reading. I will be very candid. I have basically two things to say: (1) What I learned last night about cross cultural discipline, and (2) How it feels to be defeated.

Starting with No. 2: I feel that with complete objectivity I can say that I have really tried, especially with the Study Center. If one desires to succeed and is motivated to success by what one feels is needed and yet cannot accomplish what one has set out to do, one is defeated. I am not making myself clear. I do not like to really apply all my energies (as is common among most of us) toward a goal. The threat of failue is great enough in any venture that to be reticent is to be able to say upon failure that you did not really try. When I really try, I usually succeed. When I really try and do not succeed, I am defeated, or have been defeated. There is no way to explain it other than: I just did not cut it.

From this position, i.e., one who has tried (really tried) and failed, I feel that I am justified in criticizing some prevalent attitudes and those who have them from the OFC program. No one would help. Was not the purpose of the tutorial good? Useful or what? Assuming that all involved understood that it was useful, I am left with the conclusion that OFC, candidates and staff, are not willing to make the personal sacrifice of involving themselves in this type of project (or any other, for that matter).

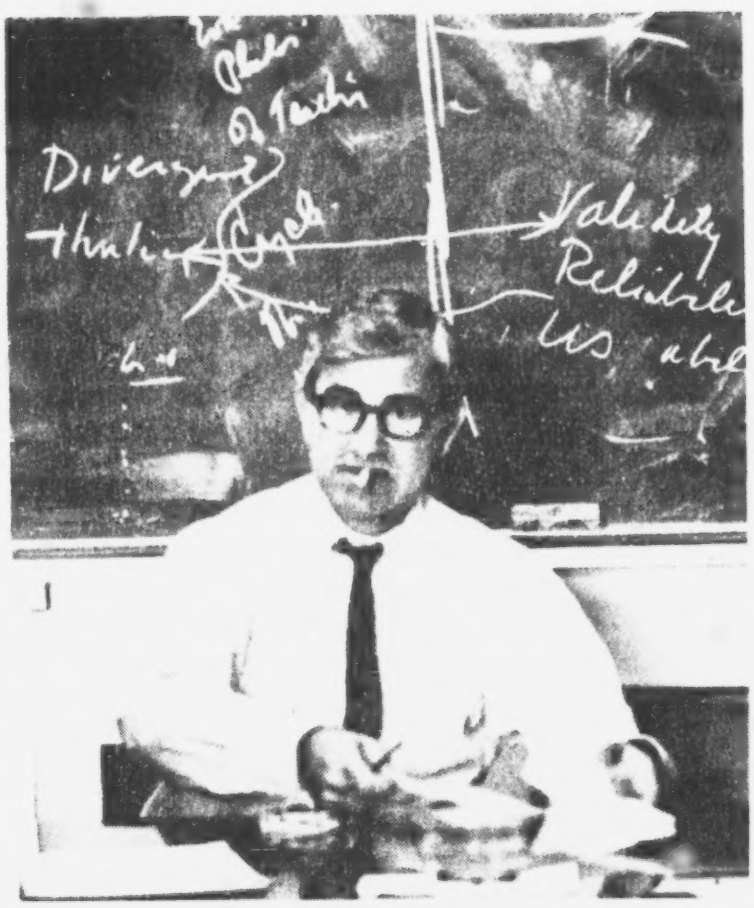
The learning process must include involvement—personal, emotional involvement, and that's when these college graduate types have missed out. Being able to accomplish assigned tasks has allowed them to avoid becoming involved. The academic attitude is one of disinvolvement, of objectivity. How can we learn anything about a different set of values without reverting back to that primitive educational process, involvement? It's not coming out right!

Defeat is hard to take especially when everyone around isn't even trying anything. Will you believe me? I don't think I can return to the Study Center. Slowly I have begun to lash out at the kids—not because I don't like them, but because we have too little interest or authority to spread around among all the kids that come. I could ask for help. Why do that, though? No one has responded before. I could maintain the Center as it is which would not appreciably benefit kids and would not be good for my attitude. My last recourse is to admit defeat. It is not easy and I don't really understand why I can't make it alone without the help I can't get.

I don't even feel like writing about the other thing.

P.S. I was ready for my class not living up to expectations! After all, what can you ask of any kids—not perfection. But to find that 95% of my peers and advisors weren't even trying, that they were relying upon academic platitudes and institutional solutions was just too much.

Program Offerings



All this theoretical stuff is dulling our intuition–stress on wrong thing, i.e., intellectual solution to problems instead of human, interpersonal solutions. The "ideal" teacher is a person, not a *skit*.

I'm very glad that we had those handouts to read on discipline–especially the shaming type.* I wish that I had read it before this morning as I used that technique (to little apparent effect) in my Math class.

**Shaming Methods of Disciplining Students*

What I don't feel I'm getting out of the program:

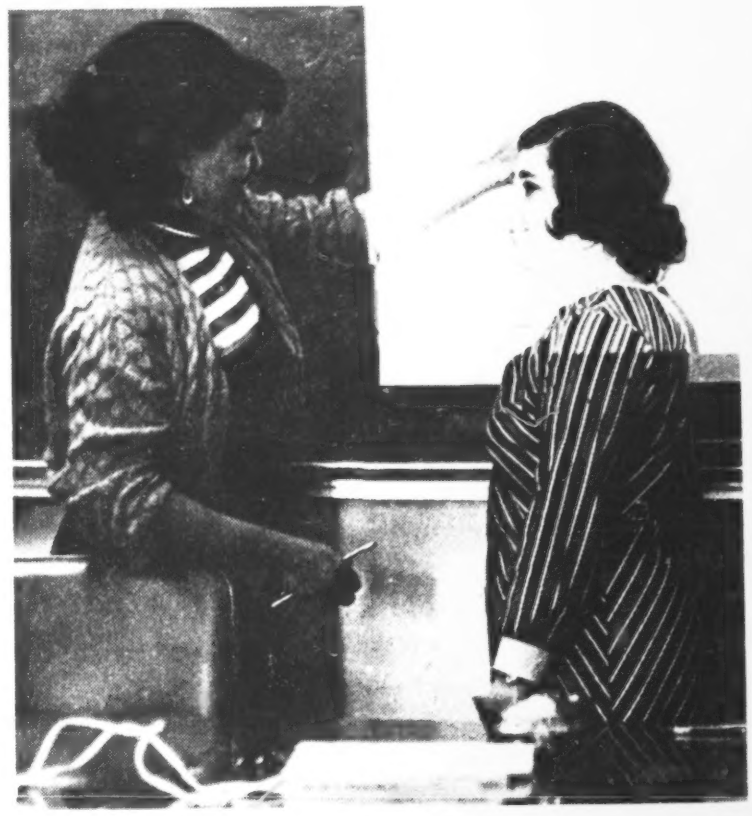
1. Enough opportunities to talk with others about whether I'm doing the right thing (following workable procedures) to my classroom.
2. I realize I don't know how to teach and I got into OFC to be taught how to do some of the things I don't know how to do. I feel that many (or some) of the candidates think they already know how to to teach–and now they want to go out and start all sorts of new programs, projects, etc. Maybe I'm slow at catching on, but it's taking all my time just trying to figure out a good way to get my subject across. I need some advice unlike some other candidates I've spoken to.

C. School–what an experience. It was worthwhile seeing those teachers in action. You could tell they knew their jobs. It was a treat to see the small classrooms and all those volunteers. It would be a nice place to teach, but still I remembered that for the most part I'd be teaching in an overcrowded classroom with no aide. So I would have to learn how to deal with these problems now. The ideal situation is great to think about for the future, but right now, I must be realistic and think of the present.

Speakers like Terry Borton, i.e., people who have been successful teachers, make me step back and look at what I am doing and trying to do in the classroom.

I say I like criticism–it's not true. I'm afraid of it–that's why I think it's necessary in a program such as ours to have everyone helping everyone else to become better teachers.

The seminar was very interesting today, not because of the use of the A-V materials, but because we (or I) were able to see the different teaching techniques of the other candidates. I could see how some candidates could lose their students within the first 3 minutes of class while others would be able to hold the interest of the class for the entire time.



Having reached the midway, "point of no return," period of this undertaking, I want to get down on paper just what my feelings are. I asked myself–am I disappointed in the program? Am I disenchanted with teaching? Am I truly interested in the Basic Track student? If so, am I making any progress in this area? Since I have been so frustrated in so many areas (seemingly) and discouraged, I felt that the answers to all the above would be pretty much in the negative. However, upon some real soul-searching, I found that most of my troubles are temporary ones, that I still am interested and have gained some degree of self-confidence, and think I will be a good teacher at the end of this year.

I was talking with another candidate the other day and he was asking me where I was applying for a job. I indicated my uncertainty of other places beside Oakland and how I wasn't sure where I could best put my energies to work. He pointed out that his interest was in fighting poverty more than racial prejudice and I began to wonder about myself. I guess I agree with him in the respect that poverty seems to breed undereducated, illiterate people and I am deeply concerned about this. Yet I also feel that racial prejudice cannot be ignored, especially in areas around Oakland where I have been involved in OFC. I think perhaps when I teach in lower economic areas I am more aware of racial problems, because people are talking about these problems more freely and more earnestly. It has certainly made me more aware of the attempt in many areas where I grew up to ignore or block out discussions of poverty and race as crucial problems confronting us today. I don't consider myself a "militant" in the political sense, but I am certainly now, at the end of this year in OFC, more alert and sensitive to the situation confronting Oakland's poor *and* middle-class residents. I feel the pressures within a large urban city and I'm not afraid to face them head-on, with understanding.

Capsule View of a Candidate

10/9 Becoming accustomed to the classroom now and developing new ideas and revising old ones about the classroom situation. I began to talk to others, especially my master teacher, about the way I feel on certain things at C. High. Some of these things were inattentiveness in the classroom, the non-motivated status of some of the students (even some of the gifted ones) and the stress on dress and having material things.

As I began to express my views that students should strive to obtain a higher level of thought and education to help them move out of the situation in which most of them find themselves, the reply came to me, "Man, this is a non-serious situation." What in the hell does he mean "non-serious"? How serious can one get about educating the generation that we have before us today? Could it be that this sense of apathy develops through the years of constant teaching. I hope that this doesn't happen to me.

We need to stress to students that there are values in life other than just the materialistic ones. To quote Friedenberg: "The highest function of education is to help people understand the meaning of their lives, and become more sensitive to the meaning of other people's lives and relate to them more fully."

We have developed the idea that the public school is the gateway to economic opportunity. In a way it is. Friedenberg says, "The present furor over school dropouts is not a result of any increase in the population of youngsters who do not finish school, but the fact that there is no place for the dropout to go in our economy."

Let's teach our youngsters that education should serve as a stimulant to their personal lives, that in order to be able to communicate with clarity and understanding some basic knowledge is necessary, and that for the student it affords him a chance to explore and come to logical conclusions of the things that he wants out of life based on the facts that he has at hand.

10/16 This week achievement tests were given at C. I've never seen such a rebellion against "authority"! No respect for directions what-so-ever. I feel that if the students had been oriented properly concerning the nature of the exams, how valuable it was to each individual student, and the value of it to the school as a whole, that some of the students would have developed a different attitude toward the whole thing. I was so disappointed in the responses that were given to the tests. Students practically ignored anything that seemed to be "right." When I questioned the teacher with whom I was working, she said: "Well, you know it's early in the morning and the poor dears are tired." This is the <u>damn</u> trouble. Why hasn't someone tried to instill in these kids some responsibility? Why do they have such a rebellion against authority? *(Staff Comment: Why should they accept authority?)*

I visited the head counselor's office at the end of the testing period and told him of some of my reactions. He said: "Oh! Nat! not you too!" What did he mean? Am I becoming addicted to the system?

10/27 I thought that things were going along too smoothly! Here I was bragging on how good my class was, no real problems involved. Well, take another look at your good class. Boy, did I get it today!

The students were climbing the walls today. Before I could get the class started they were on me. One fellow wanted to get his picture taken. He was late for his first period class, so he

wanted to take my time. I told him that he could go some other time. He insisted that he go now. I replied: "If you leave the classroom unexcused, bring a notice back from the v.p.'s office." He immediately went to his seat.

Student no. 2 came to class late. He explained why he was late and I told him to take his seat. Instead of sitting down, he began to disrupt the class by arguing with another student. Then he decides "Well, I'm not staying in class today." So he stands in the doorway and begins a discussion with another student in the hall. I told him not to come back to class until he had gone to the v.p.'s office and brought me a notice stating such a visit. In the meantime he met the master teacher in the hall and gave him a different story, trying to put me on the spot. Fortunately the master teacher went along with the decision that I had made.

Student no. 3 had lost her wallet then gotten it back from the office. She wanted to go back to the office to find out about her money. I inquired as to why she hadn't done this when she picked up the wallet. I told her to take care of it later. She created a big disturbance. In desperation I signed a pass and told her to go where ever she wanted to go.

Apparently this upset the rest of the girls in the class. All of a sudden they developed a hostile attitude about everything done in the class today. They began to talk back about I was giving them too much to write when today was the first time that I had given a formal lecture. Finally, I had to stop my lecture and demand that I have their attention and that at the time there was room for one person to talk and that person was me.

I hate to explode like that. My adrenalin level really went up. Is it good to explode in class like that? I wonder what will happen when I go to class Monday?

10/30 As you remember in my last statements in the journal concerning the discipline and lack of motivation of my class, I was having a pretty rough time. I wish I had some good reports to make in this section of the journal. However this is not the case.

Today I reported to class, rather fearfully, hoping that all that had happened in class Friday would have been forgotten and that we could start off on a new and productive track.

Fortunately, I had no discipline problems today, neither did I have any class cooperation. The students were very cold and hostile in their nature. Silence was the word. Maybe it was because of the explosion that had occurred with me in the class Friday. I thought that I had finally succeeded in developing a good class; but what good is it if they sit in class and don't say anything either? I figured that the rough edge would wear off and we would get back to work in a couple of days.

One problem is really the nature of the class itself. The students are very immature, no desire for self-discipline, no sense of motivation for learning. If I could find at least two or three students in the classroom who showed some potential, then I could work on this group hoping to bring up the level of the class to a better standard than now exists.

11/1 I have had it with philosophy on the nature of the student and why they do as they do. I know all about the culturally disadvantaged, the homelife and this sort of thing. After all, I am a negro myself but this didn't keep me from going on. *(Staff Comment: Do all negroes have identical experiences?)*

I saw how hard my father worked to develop a homelife for his family – the long hours of hard labor, the home he built for us, the sense of dedication and motivation, and the amazing task that he accomplished, as a semi-skilled worker, in sending three kids to college.

My master teacher is full of ideas on causes and effects, but philosophy won't help the situation. In the battle with ignorance and apathy, as teachers, the classroom is our fighting ground. *(Staff Comment: Can philosophy help one in a battle? i.e., whose side you are on?)*

11/7 I had mentioned to the class on Monday that we would have an exam in a week on everything that we had done during the report card period. Today I was going to define the things that would be covered. I had originally planned for the exam to last about twenty minutes, but something happened in the classroom again today.

There are a couple of people in my class who are set on creating a constant disturbance. While I was outlining the exam on the board, one student began to make annoying sounds, my girl who will argue anything before she even listens to explanations began her daily routine, and several other things began to happen.

Now I stretched the examination to one hour. *(Staff Comment: Is a test used as punishment?)* If the proper attitude or atmosphere had been developed in the classroom from the very beginning, I think that the situation would be entirely different.

I finished writing the ideas concerning the examination on the board and what was to be done in the laboratory exercise today and left the classroom – not to return.

I saw my college supervisor and told him what had happened and that I couldn't go on in the program being frustrated day-to-day as I was now. He suggested I go with him to visit a woman who had been with him in another internship program. She had similar difficulties while doing her internship.

11/8 I went to _____ High to visit _____, the teacher that my supervisor had told me about. She had decided that instead of teaching strictly textbook material, she would develop something of immediate interest to the students. This she did in form of a class on human development. The ideas that she had developed and the concepts concerning the nature of her students proved to be quite profitable. As a result, I am spending some time doing research on "human development" hoping that it will turn out to be a pleasant experience in teaching as well as for my class.

Journal for 2nd Quarter (Jan. 2 – Mar 15)

This quarter has produced quite a few changes in my professional attitudes toward students, toward education and its purpose in general, and also in the level of public school education in which I wanted to be involved.

There were a few unpleasant thoughts in my mind concerning the return to the classroom after the Christmas Holidays. I knew that my students would be "climbing the walls," that any conditioning that I had implanted in them would have completely vanished during the two week span of absence. However, things proved to be quite different and I was amazed at the level of development that they had achieved and were maintaining.

The elementary supervisors had arranged for various field trips for candidates in order for them to observe operating conditions of schools in other districts, namely, Berkeley. Politely, they asked some of the secondary candidates to join them on this venture. I decided to go, not that I had the slightest idea of ever going into teaching at the elementary level. I had had such a hard time becoming adjusted to the higher grades, how in the hell was I going to survive with the younger kids?

Anyway, I went expecting to see the same traditional type of elementary education that I received – with its limited student involvement and all teacher talk. But kids now in the elementary schools (especially the Berkeley system) are beginning to receive the best education possible. I saw some of the same techniques being used in the elementary classroom that I have applied to my secondary students, and, if I actually looked at the facts, I was teaching elementary students at the secondary level!

Immediately I became excited at the thought of transferring my efforts towards the elementary level. Since my area of specialization is science, I visited some of the experimental science classes at the _____School in Berkeley run by the ScienceCurriculum Improvement Study Group at U.C. Berkeley. I was amazed at the types of things they were trying to achieve at this level.

I was so enthused that I wanted to make arrangements so that I could take on an elementary assignment. I talked with one of the elementary supervisors and he immediately went to work to establish such an arrangement. As a result, I am now teaching a 5th/6th grade combination of very bright kids at _____Elementary School in science.

I am now fulfilling my secondary obligation as well as working on partial fulfillment of the elementary credential.

I never shall forget March 12, 1968, when I signed a contract with the Berkeley Unified School District as a science resource teacher at the elementary level. I could see all of the hard work and strenuous hours that I had spent coming into a fruitful vein.

The following is my statement that I wrote in my application blank to Berkeley:

> "The present curriculum of elementary school does not meet the needs that are currently being demanded in the secondary schools. I find this to be true especially in the field of science.
>
> It is important that students be able to read and write at their level. We are not producing thinkers with the type of program that most districts are now offering. I feel that the field of science can incorporate all fields of concentrated learning.
>
> In developing any curriculum, economic and cultural background should be given grave consideration. Schools should have a curriculum that is appropriate for a heterogeneous group, so that factors such as racial balancing of schools won't call for a complete revision of presently used methods."

I couldn't finish this journal without expressing a few thoughts about my late friend, Lewis Banks. There was a guy, a Negro, who was trying to make it in this society and was doing so successfully. He was cut off at the prime of his life (Feb. 22, 1968). Because we had shared many ideas, his death gave me even more incentive to try to accomplish the goals that I had set for myself. For I know that Lew would want me to do everything possible that I could to raise the status of the Negro male in the public school system.

Journal for 3rd Quarter (Mar. 25 – May 24)

Too often secondary teachers receive students from junior high school and elementary schools into their classrooms not knowing the conditions which existed in the institutions which their students formerly attended. Being unaware of the conditions that have prevailed, they are also ignorant of the needs of the students that have not been satisfied at the lower levels. At any rate, they proceed, at the expense of the student, to carry on what they consider are normal teaching activities (more often teacher-oriented than student-directed),

directing the students in so-called lines of learning that have no relationship to student development and achievement. (Yet they wonder why the discipline problem is so high and the rate of absenteeism increases constantly.)

Any teacher of high school students should have some in-service training during the student-teaching year that involves contact with students at the elementary and junior high levels -- not in terms of courses in child growth and development, but in practical experience gained in observation and participation.

The one lesson that I have learned from each of these experiences is that students learn by doing. My objective in any of the subject areas that I have taught was to have students understand the nature of the subject being taught, and to have them establish some practical application for the learning that they have received. Being grounded in the sciences, practical application is the most important step to me. Why bother learning if it can't be used? There are enough encyclopedias on the shelves if all one wants out of learning is a recall mechanism!

As I have stated above, too many classes are teacher directed. Activities are planned with no conception of what the students' interests are. I slipped into this situation, but, thank God, I saw that the need for change was in me – not in educating the student to change in order to absorb a bunch of non-sense materials.

I think back to the fall when I was having the most frustrating experience of my life! Man, was I teaching! Lecturing on biological principles that I knew (at the time) belonged in any biology class, no matter what the level. Sure they belonged, but not the way that I was presenting them.

I took my firm stand as authority. "You learn it, damn it, because I am going to pour it into your heads." I was going to teach them (more likely expose them to) everything that it took me 25 hard years to learn. And I expected them to get it in nine months. Not only did I expect them to get it, but to vomit it back to me on any well designed assignments (busy work) or tests that I administered.

"Man, you are going to learn if I have to beat it into your dumb heads. And, if you give me any trouble, I can send you to the vice-principal's office and thus eliminate the nuisance that exists. Pop quizzes, zeros on exams – that's okay. I've done my duty. I explained it all to you, and you didn't receive. Well, that's your fault. The course will be offered next year."

I really couldn't understand these kids. Have times changed that drastically since I attended high school? Where were all the values that were preached to me about obtaining a better education so that I could make something out of my life? I never asked myself the question, "What am I supposed to do and what am I trying to make?"

The only thing that I perceived when I was in that situation was that I was lazy and that I didn't want to spend my life making a living the way that my father did! I wasn't the smartest kid around, but everything that I did or obtained, I worked like hell to obtain it. If I made it through four glorious years of hell (and if you want proof, examine my transcript) to obtain something that everyone told me I needed, why can't these kids do the same?

Had I become so "white middle-class" oriented that I had forgotten all about the motivational factors of the Negro?

Well, I revamped my course. I took time asking about the problems of teen-agers, especially culturally deprived students. What does science mean to them? What relationship exists between science and the application of it to the society (especially their society)? Oh, I came up with a lot of hairbrained ideas, but then I asked the kids. I styled my course around this pattern of student interest, and we had one glorious field day.

Even through things went beautifully in lab, I still had one educational hang-up – that of testing and measurement. The laboratories were constructed beautifully. Students were working away diligently. But the old stupid teacher still came back with non-related examinations – a feed back of irrelevant material that no one ever remembered. As a result, the grades were still low.

I developed worksheets that went along with each activity that we had. These sheets were in the form of charts, directive conclusions, lab drawings and anything they could get the student to draw some inference from the material that was being studied. These worksheets were then my tests. Since they involved a sequential development of thought, I tried to connect everything that we did in one unit to the following unit, and not only with the next unit, but also with the practical application thereof.

My 5th/6th grade combination could have been (and, in ways it was) a very pleasant or even an exciting experience. Structure was my worst enemy. The students were bright and very receptive – but disciplined to the point that one ounce of freedom lead to chaos. When I got them it was free-for-all time. But what else can you expect when the kind of understanding they receive is in the form of: 1) go stand in the closet, 2) no games for you today, 3) stay in at recess, and 4) I'll see you after school. Kids know when they are being knifed in the back, so they go along with the program.

The last task that I attempted to tackle during my one year of becoming a professional (?) educator, was what I considered quite a challenging one. This was a group of students (5th grade) with five different reading levels, impossible as all hell to organize, but very verbal and tactful in expression. If a stranger walked into the room during one of my sessions of the three-ringed circus, he would want to know, "what in the hell is this fool doing in a public school classroom?" He is as insane as those monsters seem to be!" But here is a case of students being very verbal, and very disorganized. But the feedback I received from them in terms of understanding pupil-related activities was tremendous. Role-playing I found to be a great learning aid for these kids, in that they got to see themselves in varying situations. I only wished that I had had much more time to work with them.

Oh, I could ramble on making statement after statement, but to tell you the God's truth, I can't express in writing the wonderful feeling that I have experienced during my year with Operation Fair Chance.

If someone had given me a push in the fall and said, "Nat, you will never make a teacher; why don't you try something else?", I would have quit without any questions what-so-ever.

But the change that I feel within my personality, both concerning my own personal development and also the relationship of the school to the individual, the society and the environment is beyond description.

Who knows how successful I have been with these students? I don't know. No formal test could measure what I tried to accomplish with them. The only gauge was the cooperation of students in helping to develop any idea or concept in which they were involved.

My discipline problems with the secondary people fell to zero. Verbal feedback was excellent. Yet, I feel that I have left something out. Oh, I know what it is – that of kicking myself in the rear for getting myself involved in something that works the hell out of me, causes me to spend restless nights, – but I love every damn minute of it.

Oh, how I have wished that Lew Banks could have been here to enjoy some of the glory that I feel in completing this program. But, because Lew is gone, I am going to do all that is in my power to get more black men involved with establishing our educational system. It is true that the Negro has been deprived of every possible way to establish a stable economy, but now is the time to produce. There is a motive for staying in school. It is an advantage to be "Black." But, have something to be "Black" with!

Be able to walk up and say, "Okay, you have denied me in the past because you said that I wasn't qualified. You closed the doors of your institutions to me where I could have obtained those qualifications that you wanted me to have. But here I am now standing at your door – qualified to the brim. What are you going to do about me now?"

Let us teach our youngsters that education should serve as a stimulant to their personal lives, that in order to communicate with clarity and understanding some basic knowledge is necessary, that education affords the student a chance to explore and to come to logical conclusions about the things that he wants out of life based on the facts that he has at hand.

Amen and thank God!

N.S. Pearson

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*Lewis Banks died in an accident on February 22, 1968, less than a month after he had begun his teaching career while completing his studies at OFC. His loss was a tragedy felt equally by the staff, his fellow candidates and his own students at Castlemont High School. A performance by American Conservatory Theater of "In White America" at Castlemont High School, sponsored by OFC and other community organizations, became a memorial to Lew and the profits from the performance were given to his surviving wife and children.

On November 10, 1966, the California State Board of Education officially and unanimously approved the Operation Fair Chance Program at both Hayward and Fresno State Colleges. The Board action guarantees acceptance of the credentialing process already worked out with the College and the State. OFC candidates recommended to the State Board of Education as competent beginning teachers will receive standard credentials acceptable in any public school in California.

Acknowledgement is hereby directed to those people, both on the Federal and State levels for their support of the OFC Program.

Philip Teske, Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D.C.

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